United Nations A/55/PV.53

General Assembly

Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

53rd plenary meeting
Tuesday, 7 November 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Mungra (Suriname), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Agenda item 14 (*continued*)

Report of the International Atomic Energy Agency

Note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Agency (A/55/284 and Corr.1)

Draft resolution (A/55/L.25)

Amendment (A/55/L.26/Rev.1)

Amendment (A/55/L.27)

Ms. Chin Powles (New Zealand): My delegation wishes to thank the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report of the Agency for 1999. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) gave the Director General and his team a resounding vote of confidence. The Agency has New Zealand's unqualified support for its important work in carrying out its mandate fully and professionally. New Zealand attaches special significance to two pillars of the Agency's work. They are the contribution that it makes to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament through its safeguards and verification role, and its activities in promoting a global nuclear safety culture. Although much has been achieved, there is still much to be done in both areas.

New Zealand was among the first to bring into force a protocol additional to our safeguards agreement with the Agency. The slow growth in adherence to the strengthened safeguards system is a source of disappointment. Certainly the number of signatories is growing — around 53 by last count — but with fewer than half of the protocols in force, more determined effort is required if universal adherence, and the assurance of non-proliferation it would confer, are to be achieved.

New Zealand applauds the recent developments on the Korean peninsula, but again we must record our concern about the lack of progress on safeguards implementation issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the new climate that is prevailing in that country will move it to cooperate fully with the Agency in coming into full compliance with its safeguards agreement, which remains binding and in force.

Since December 1998, the Agency has not been in a position to implement its mandate in Iraq under the relevant Security Council resolutions, and there is thus no assurance of compliance with those resolutions. The Agency's visit to Iraq in January pursuant to Iraq's safeguards agreement was welcome, but it did not constitute a substitute.

New Zealand's concern about the effect of nuclear-related accidents on humanity and our environment runs deep. We therefore support strongly the Agency's work to strengthen international cooperation in nuclear radiation and waste safety, and

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-73175 (E)

the assistance it is able to give in the event of an accident. New Zealand has done everything it can to minimize the risks of nuclear-related accidents in our own country and in our region. But we remain vulnerable to the effects of a nuclear-related accident because of the maritime transport of radioactive materials.

At this year's General Conference New Zealand, along with a group of co-sponsors from a wide range of geographic regions, was responsible for a resolution on the safety of transport of radioactive materials. That resolution, while perhaps not as strong as we would all have liked, moved the issue forward in a useful and balanced way. We were particularly pleased that it was possible to secure a successful outcome by consensus on a subject to which New Zealanders and others in our immediate region attach such importance.

The international community has high expectations of the International Atomic Energy Agency. It can only continue to fulfil those expectations if Member States ensure that the Director General has the resources and the support to meet the challenges the membership establishes for the Agency. New Zealand for its part will continue to contribute constructively in support of the Agency's extremely important work.

Mr. Šerkšnys (Lithuania): At the outset, I wish to thank Director General Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei for his comprehensive and excellent report on the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also wish to express our appreciation for the Agency's outstanding performance, and we commend his dedicated and effective leadership.

Lithuania has aligned itself with the European Union statement delivered yesterday in connection with this agenda item. Apart from that, I wish to take this opportunity to outline a number of specific issues.

The report of the Director General, transmitted in document A/55/284, comprehensively and fairly reflects the wide range of issues that have been the focus of the Agency's attention over the last year. The aspect of the IAEA's activities to which Lithuania attaches special importance is its work in the promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Against the background of growing energy demands world-wide, Lithuania concurs with the Director General that there are various opinions on the future of nuclear power. Nuclear power can help to meet global energy needs in a sustainable and environmentally conscious manner. Yet, much still needs to be done to increase economic competitiveness, advance technologies and, in particular, to improve public confidence.

Over a number of years, Lithuania has been among the leading countries in terms of the share of nuclear energy in its total energy production. Bilateral and multilateral assistance provided by donor countries, and regional and national technical cooperation projects of the IAEA, have helped elevate the safety level of the Ignalina nuclear power plant to internationally recognized safety standards.

Safety improvements notwithstanding, the parliament of Lithuania earlier this year took the decision to shut down one of the two nuclear reactors by 2005. The estimated cost of decommissioning runs to more than $1 billion, and the overall cost of decommissioning plus the treatment and storage of radioactive waste and used nuclear fuel could reach $3.5 billion. Given such an enormous financial burden, timely decommissioning could well depend on considerable long-term financial and technical assistance from the international community.

The first international donor conference, which took place in Lithuania in June 2000, marked the beginning of a long process. I wish wholeheartedly to thank Governments of the European Union, the Group of Seven and other interested States, financial institutions and the IAEA for their pledges and commitments with respect to the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant. It is extremely important that the participation of the international community in managing the issues of decommissioning be long-term and continuous.

In that regard, we wish to underline the importance of IAEA activities. Lithuania has benefited greatly from technical cooperation programmes in recent years. Now, we look forward to having a new project approved under the technical cooperation programme, whereby the IAEA would provide long-term technical assistance in decommissioning Unit 1.

We attach utmost importance to the safety of the reactor during the phase-out period. Lithuania has taken steps to ensure high standards of safety while decommissioning the reactor. The main safety criteria are set out in the general requirements for the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant,

which were drafted on the basis of documents of the IAEA and the International Commission on Radiological Protection, as well as European Union directives. Last year, Lithuania took advantage of missions by the International Physical Protection Advisory Service and the International Probabilistic Safety Assessments Review Team, which strengthened our confidence in our safety measures and criteria.

The vital role that the IAEA has been playing over many years in promoting international cooperation to strengthen nuclear safety and the culture of safety is to be commended. The IAEA has spared no effort to develop internationally recognized safety standards and guidelines and legally binding international conventions with regard to nuclear safety and radiation protection. In that respect, we wish to note the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, which was recently ratified by Lithuania.

Apart from safety, the serious issue of the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel will remain on the agenda for the longer term. Minimizing the amount of nuclear waste and improving its segregation and treatment are the main objectives of our review of a national approach to radioactive waste management. In that task Lithuania is following the guidelines and principles of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. We strongly support and encourage the Agency's work on waste minimization, especially during decommissioning operations.

The Agency's continuing work in the field of sustainable energy strategies must also be commended. Over the years the Agency has developed substantial expertise. Its data, information and analysis help national decision-makers to take well-considered decisions on how best to meet the energy needs of their countries. The Agency's role in research and development projects on innovative nuclear fuel cycles and power plants is also to be noted.

The debate on the future of nuclear power should not be confined to sustainable development but should be extended also to climate change. In that regard, the development of small and medium-sized reactors that could be competitive in their own right is to be encouraged so as to keep all options open for the future expansion of electricity supply systems in countries that lack sufficient alternative energy resources.

The international community's resolve to advance the non-proliferation regime was demonstrated during the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The States parties to the NPT clearly acknowledged that the non-proliferation regime could hardly be effective without input from the Agency. Lithuania commends and strongly supports the work of the Agency in its pursuit of universal signature of additional safeguards protocols. Lithuania was one of the first States to sign an additional protocol, and we ratified ours this year.

The creation of a strengthened safeguards system has yet to restore confidence in the system. We must ensure that the Agency has the financial and human resources it needs to carry out its responsibilities and improve its ability to detect the diversion of fissile materials and other undeclared activities. In this regard, we commend the Agency's efforts to strengthen the overall safeguards system. The increased use of short-notice inspections and the development of advanced verification technologies have proved to be of particular value in this respect. However, IAEA safeguards can be effective only so long as all States honour their commitments.

The number of States without comprehensive safeguards agreements raises concerns. However, it is even more worrisome that the IAEA has not been able so far to carry out its Security-Council-mandated activities in Iraq or to provide assurances regarding the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We hope that the latest positive developments regarding the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will soon find their way into the area of safeguards.

Finally, I wish to reiterate that Lithuania looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the IAEA, which we value so highly. The Agency can count on Lithuania's constructive support. Lithuania has sponsored draft resolutions on the report of the IAEA for a number of years. We will do our utmost to support the draft resolution introduced by Nigeria; we strongly wish to see it adopted by consensus.

Mr. Ivanov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): I wish at the outset to thank the Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr.

Mohamed ElBaradei, for his introduction of the report of the Agency. My delegation has carefully studied the report, and highly appreciates its excellent quality.

Because of the ever-increasing pace of technological progress, economic globalization and the specialization of production, and because of the increasing interdependence among States, Governments must develop extensive energy infrastructures to meet the growing demand for electricity. Given the limits of traditional energy sources, it was necessary to find a new way of safely providing affordable energy. That way was the peaceful use of nuclear power. But we know from bitter experience that even the peaceful atom has caused terrible tragedies with world-shaking consequences.

Under those circumstances, the work of the IAEA, one of the most extraordinary and highly respected international organizations, is extremely important. We believe that the IAEA is playing a more important role than ever before in guaranteeing the non-proliferation regime, in creating safe systems for current nuclear installations, and in providing scientific and technical assistance to its member States.

Belarus has always supported the work of the IAEA aimed at guaranteeing the non-proliferation regime and has consistently advocated the strengthening of that regime. This is evidenced by the fact that my country has signed, and is strictly implementing the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Safeguards Agreement. This year, our Republic joined the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Guided by the principles of non-proliferation, Belarus of course complies with all the commitments entered into under the Safeguards Agreement. Experts in my country are now completing the process of studying the protocol additional to the Safeguards Agreement with a view to signing it. In this respect, we are grateful to the Agency for organizing in Minsk a special seminar on sharing experience on working to implement the additional protocol.

Our delegation would like to inform the General Assembly that Belarus has now carried out a number of elements on the strengthened safeguards system. Agency inspectors have annual visas and are able to gain access so that they can take samples from the surfaces of hot chambers. The Government has made a decision about a remote monitoring system at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Scientific and Technical Centre in Sosny. We are also participating in the open-ended working group to discuss the possibility and advisability of reviewing the 1980 Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material.

Should the States Parties adopt an agreed and positive decision in this regard, Belarus will seek to ensure that due account is given to the interests of countries that do not have adequate institutional and financial resources in order to help to improve their national protection systems. Our country is also actively participating in the IAEA programme to combat the illicit trafficking in nuclear material and other radioactive sources. We believe that it is now urgently necessary to develop a single conceptual approach to establishing radiation standards. As many speakers have noted, introducing such common standards, to replace the various standards that now apply, would help countries to combat trafficking in nuclear materials and also facilitate the trade in and transport of goods across borders.

Another important aspect of IAEA work is ensuring maximum security for currently operative nuclear energy and nuclear technology installations. Our people paid an enormous price in learning how important it is to ensure the safety of technology. As a result of the Chernobyl disaster thousands of adults and children are suffering from a variety of cancers, much of our fertile land has been taken out of production and our State has been forced to spend more than it spends on national defence simply to deal with the consequences of our disaster. In this context, we are grateful to the IAEA for the practical assistance that is has provided in the past and that it is still providing under the technical cooperation programme.

Belarus supports the IAEA's proposal for partnership for development and approves of the current three-pronged strategy for technical cooperation based on model projects, national framework programmes and thematic planning. We are particularly impressed by the fact that each IAEA project is geared towards actual concrete output.

Having carefully studied the report, we must point out that one of the most striking consequences of radiation accidents is fear of radioactivity on the part

of the public. This can be overcome only by proving that nuclear power can be used safely to help people, both in theory and in practice. On the theoretical side, we must encourage more scientific research on a new generation of nuclear power plants that is much safer, even in emergency situations, and more efficient. We hope that the IAEA will accord even more attention in future to developing this area of nuclear science.

We are very concerned about the tendency of young scientists and specialists with nuclear expertise to leave our countries. We believe that the safe functioning of our nuclear power structures will not be possible if we do not have highly educated and talented young people working in this area. To some extent this problem is due to a certain stagnation in efforts to find new applications for nuclear energy and to improve existing technology.

In conclusion, the delegation of Belarus would like to commend the work of the Agency and support the main areas of future activity. We hope that there will be close cooperation with the Agency in resolving all problems relating to the peaceful uses of nuclear power.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): First of all, I should like, on behalf of my delegation, to extend our congratulations to Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), for his leadership and for the effective manner in which he is steering the work of the IAEA.

Pakistan remains firmly committed to the goals and objectives of the International Atomic Energy Agency. As a founding member of the IAEA, we are glad to note that the it remains among the most efficiently run organizations in the entire United Nations system. The tasks assigned to it are scientifically challenging, technically complex, politically sensitive and financially demanding. The IAEA's statutory objective that the Agency shall seek to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world, gives it a unique and multifaceted role in the process of economic development.

We acknowledge with appreciation the IAEA's role in helping Pakistan to benefit from the peaceful use of the atom in fields ranging from nuclear power production to agriculture. Through its technical assistance, the IAEA has contributed to our efforts at establishing a base of professional manpower, research institutes, training facilities, medical centres and other technical services in the field of the peaceful uses of the atom.

For its part, Pakistan has provided training opportunities to many IAEA nominees. Our experience with the peaceful uses of technology is being shared with other developing countries only under IAEA auspices. We believe that such interactions among the developing countries will further strengthen the spirit of technical cooperation among developing countries.

Pakistan's impeccable record in terms of nuclear safety and safeguards, its participation in the Agency's promotional activities and its active and constructive role in the IAEA's policy-making organs reflect our abiding commitment to the promotion of the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

The promotion of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is the *raison d'être* of the International Atomic Energy Agency. The world is steadily requiring more energy. Energy multiplies human labour, increasing productivity. World population surpassed the 6 billion mark last year. Yet one third of that number — 2 billion people — lack access to electricity. Development depends on energy, and the alternative to development is poverty and suffering.

The energy demand cannot be met by fossil fuel alone, as this would place an unacceptable burden on the environment. The massive development of hydropower is one option. The only other proven and sustainable option is the use of nuclear energy. We feel that opposition to nuclear power, despite its good safety record and environmentally friendly character, is either based on misunderstanding or is a deliberate pretext to deny this technology to developing countries.

Pakistan, in view of the limitations of its fossil fuel and hydropower resources, is keen to make increasingly large use of nuclear power to meet its future electricity requirements.

Moreover, as a large part of current power-generation requirements are being met through the use of oil, huge oil-import bills are incurred. In order to diversify the country's power-generation system and reduce its dependence on energy imports, increasing the use of nuclear power is a desirable option for Pakistan. In this context, we duly acknowledge the cooperation extended by the IAEA in the construction

phase of our second nuclear plant at Chashma, which is under IAEA full safeguards.

A high-profile "safety culture" is an indispensable component of any successful nuclear power programme. The lessons of Chernobyl must not be forgotten in the context of the safe development of nuclear energy. We are pleased that the IAEA has played a very important role in providing information and advice to all its members on safety-related issues. Pakistan has ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety, as we believe that this Convention has an important role in improving the safety culture of States parties. We call upon all countries with nuclear power programmes that have not already done so to accede to, and ratify, the Convention immediately and thus enhance nuclear safety worldwide.

The implementation of nuclear safeguards agreements constitutes an important facet of the IAEA's activities. We are satisfied at the fact that during 1999, the IAEA's vast safeguards-related activities, extending to 900 facilities in some 70 countries and involving more than 10,000 person/days of inspection, show that the nuclear material and other items declared and placed under Agency safeguards were used in peaceful nuclear activities and were adequately accounted for. For its part, Pakistan has faithfully discharged its safeguards obligations under its agreements of the INFCIRC/66 category with the Agency.

Seen in the context of the IAEA's statutory obligations and the aspirations of a vast majority of its membership, technical cooperation and the transfer of technology remain at the heart of the IAEA's promotional role. We are not satisfied that, as compared to the projected $73 million, the voluntary Technical Cooperation Fund has received only $64 million. While lauding the Agency's positive role in technical cooperation, we urge that this aspect of the IAEA's work be further strengthened.

It is important, for the credibility of the IAEA and for ensuring widespread benefits from the peaceful uses of the atom, that the IAEA maintain its focus on its technical promotional character. As such, we are concerned to note that there has been a visible shift in emphasis towards the verification role of IAEA. This trend needs to be countered and corrected and the balance restored. Of course, safeguards constitute a basic function of the Agency. But safeguards provide only a legal framework for pursuing the primary objective of the IAEA, namely the promotion of peaceful uses of atomic energy.

We expect the Agency to adopt non-discriminatory measures in providing access to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The Agency's primary purpose is to promote the peaceful uses of nuclear power under technically safe conditions, not to serve as a nuclear policeman.

Pakistan remains committed to the goals of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Pakistan has historically supported all proposals and agreements aimed at the limitation, progressive reduction and eventual elimination of weapons of mass destruction. For over a quarter-century, we made efforts and initiated proposals to keep South Asia free of nuclear weapons. Those efforts collapsed in the face of the Indian nuclear tests conducted in May 1998.

It is a well-known fact that the Indian nuclear-weapon programme developed and matured on the basis of the illicit acquisition of sensitive technology and a not-so-secret rechannelling of India's nuclear power programme, in blatant disregard of its international commitments and obligations. For many years, it professed to have a peaceful nuclear programme. Subsequent developments, however, clearly exposed the wide gap that has always existed between its words and deeds.

The enormity of the resultant threat to our security forced us to conduct our own nuclear tests to restore a strategic balance and maintain peace in the region. Restraint and responsibility remain the guiding principles of our nuclear policy. We have announced a unilateral moratorium on further testing and emphasize the need to prevent a nuclear arms race.

We have also proposed to India the establishment of a strategic restraint regime in South Asia. During the past year, we have further strengthened our already stringent domestic regulations against the export of nuclear equipment or materials.

Mr. Granovsky (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation would like to welcome the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, and thanks him for introducing the Agency's latest report to us.

In our view, the IAEA report provides an objective picture of the multifaceted work of the Agency, covering such key areas as ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through its monitoring functions and promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development. The Russian Federation believes it important to work with the IAEA to develop the peaceful use of nuclear energy. One noteworthy example of this was the signing in March this year of the protocol additional to the safeguards agreement between Russia and the IAEA. We are ready to continue doing our utmost to strengthen the Agency's policy-making and scientific potential.

The Agency report is being issued after the successful completion of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Russia, as one of the depositories for the NPT, is pleased that the documents adopted at the Review Conference set forth a detailed agenda for furthering nuclear disarmament. We believe that the Conference's success derived from achieving a carefully calibrated balance of interests in the final document. Now, if we want that document to be effective, we have to preserve that balance without upsetting it for the benefit of this or that national position.

It is also important to realistically assess the situation. Further reductions of strategic offensive weapons can be achieved only in close concurrence with the preservation and strengthening of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Preservation of the 1972 ABM Treaty, which is the keystone of global strategic stability, opens the possibility of concluding a START III agreement that provides for lower levels of warheads for each of the parties — 15,000 each.

NPT Conference decisions certainly enhance the role and the status of the IAEA as a universal organ for cooperation among States in the nuclear field. In our view, the main tasks facing the Agency in the twenty-first century are, on the one hand, facilitating international cooperation to provide for economically sound and environmentally safe uses of weapons-grade materials in civilian nuclear fuel cycles and, on the other hand, helping to develop new nuclear technologies that cannot be used for weapons purposes.

The Agency is already working hard on monitoring the use of fissionable materials generated by weapons programmes. We place great stock in the joint work being carried out by the experts of Russia, the United States and the IAEA, under the framework of the 1996 trilateral agreement, as regards applying Agency monitoring to fissile materials from weapons sources. The work is proceeding in accordance with the schedule approved by the three parties.

As for establishing innovative technologies that would be safe in terms of nuclear weapons proliferation, much remains to be done in this area. At the Millennium Summit, our President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, proposed a means of ensuring the energy needed for sustainable development, both fundamentally resolving the problem of nuclear-weapons proliferation and improving the health of the global environment. The Russian proposal is aimed at gradually excluding the basic weapons-grade materials — enriched uranium and pure plutonium — from being used in the production of peaceful nuclear energy. We have done research in our country that shows there is a real possibility of producing nuclear energy without these weapons-grade materials. Moreover there appears to be a possibility of burning plutonium and other elements so as to ensure that these wastes can be returned to the Earth's crust without disrupting the natural radioactivity of the Earth. This would put an end to the negative impact of nuclear energy on the environment and solve definitively the problem of radioactive wastes.

We are pleased that in September 2000, at the IAEA General Conference, the Director General supported the Russian proposal. Work has now begun on its practical implementation. In this regard the IAEA has decided to establish an ad hoc group on innovative nuclear reactors and fuel cycles. The first meeting of this group will be held at the end of November 6, 2000.

I would like to stress that the Russian proposal does not mean the immediate renunciation of the current nuclear fuel cycle and the shutting down of all operating nuclear power plants. What we envisage is broad international cooperation so that together we can develop future-oriented innovative reactor technology.

We are pleased that the draft resolution on the IAEA report invites interested Member States to work together under the aegis of the Agency to consider these matters. We also support IAEA efforts to prevent trafficking in nuclear materials, so as to raise the level of physical protection and develop national accounting

and monitoring systems for nuclear materials. We support broadening cooperation among States so as to stop nuclear smuggling.

The Agency's work to provide technical cooperation to developing countries so that they can implement priority programmes relating to the peaceful use of nuclear energy is vitally important to Russia. We actively participate in the Agency's technical cooperation programmes by providing equipment and organizing and conducting training courses and seminars for specialists from developing countries.

At the same time, we think it important that the Agency support countries with economies in transition, above all with eliminating the consequences of technological disasters. We support continuing international community assistance to countries that are suffering from the after-effects of the Chernobyl accident. We welcome the decision by the President of Ukraine to finally close this nuclear power plant.

We note the positive political changes occurring in the Korean peninsula. Despite efforts to ignore these changes at the IAEA General Conference, a resolution was adopted regarding these changes. We hope that positive shifts in this region will help to ensure full implementation of the safeguards agreement between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Agency.

In conclusion, let me join others in expressing approval of the IAEA annual report and in expressing the hope that a consensus draft resolution containing the results of this review will be prepared.

Mr. Salazar (Peru) *(spoke in Spanish)*: My delegation wishes to express its satisfaction with the comprehensive report by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei, which confirms once again the efficient performance of the Organization and the Director General's successful leadership of a group of able professionals, committed to the cause of nuclear safety and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Peru, which is in one of the first nuclear-weapon-free zones, places great importance on the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in the realization of the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), confirmed at the last Conference of the parties to this important international instrument promoting total nuclear disarmament. The IAEA also has an important role in the application of the guarantees and safeguards to which States possessing nuclear energy must commit themselves, since nuclear energy has a dual character, threatening but at the same time with ever greater applications for the social development of peoples.

Nevertheless, I would like to refer to the third pillar in the Agency's work: technical cooperation with developing countries to give them the many possibilities offered by the peaceful use of nuclear energy, with its social impact.

With respect to my country and subregion, I wish to refer to IAEA's support for the development plan for the Peru-Ecuador border area for the period 2001-2002, with the approval of two projects, one in the area of nuclear medicine, which is to receive significant funding, and the other on the application of isotopic techniques in hydrology. The latter has been approved as a regional project, in which Chile, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay and Uruguay also participate. The Agency has allotted $2 million to this project.

The official visit of the Director General of the Agency to Peru in October 1999 strengthened the relationship between the Agency and my country, which was confirmed at the highest level. That visit enabled us to inform the Agency about the various activities for the peaceful use of nuclear energy carried out in my country. Furthermore, the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding on technical cooperation with the IAEA on 18 October made it possible to make our country a sort of regional technical cooperation centre, using the Instituto Peruano de Energia Nuclear (IPEN) as a regional subcontractor, in recognition of the Institute's work as a nuclear research centre, as well as a producer of technological services. The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding is timely, in the context of a regional workshop on technical cooperation programmes for the region for the period 2001-2002, as well as the preparatory work for drawing up programmes for the next biennium.

Lastly, I would like to draw attention to the support given by the International Atomic Energy Agency in offering my country a regional seminar to promote the Additional Protocol, to be held in Lima in 2001, which will also enjoy the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and

Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), which has its headquarters in Mexico.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform Members that action on draft resolution A/55/L.25 and the amendments thereto will be taken on Friday, 10 November 2000, as the last item on the agenda.

Agenda item 27

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/55/498)

The President: The first speaker is the representative of Togo, who will make a statement on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Kpotsra (Togo) *(spoke in French)*: In his address to the General Assembly at this session, President Eyadéma, current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), placed particular stress on, among other things, the need for the international community to resolutely support the tireless efforts made by African countries to find lasting solutions to the enormous problems that they still face several decades after attaining sovereignty.

The particularly difficult situation in which African States find themselves is marked by a notable lack of stability, decaying national economies and a continually worsening health situation. This situation, exacerbated by the perverse effects of globalization, in Africa should naturally lead the international community to enhance its cooperation with African countries.

In this context, the United Nations clearly remains the most appropriate framework for action. Through its bodies, its funds, its programmes and specialized agencies, the United Nations plays a leading role in the preservation of peace and peacekeeping, as well as in promoting development in Africa. The conditions in Africa today require that the world Organization be a catalyst for the assistance needed by African countries, by strengthening its cooperation with the OAU, the subregional organizations, African Governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That is why, before going further, I would like to warmly congratulate the Secretary-General on his report on cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system in the past year.

Governed by the Agreement of 15 November 1965, updated on 9 October 1990, cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU has in recent years grown steadily. It covers such varied areas as conflict prevention, peacekeeping, electoral assistance, humanitarian aid and emergency relief, post-conflict reconstruction, the protection and promotion of human rights, access to information and communication technology, economic and social development, as well as managing refugee problems and demographic issues.

As is the case every year, the debate offers an opportunity to review what has been done in the different fields covered by this partnership in the previous year, and especially to identify possibilities to further deepen and strengthen the partnership.

With respect to peacekeeping and security, on which the United Nations undeniably has considerable experience, which it could use to help strengthen the capacity of the OAU and subregional organizations, we are pleased to note that the two organizations have continued to combine their efforts to settle and prevent conflicts in Africa.

Thus, under the tireless leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, the OAU's mediation efforts in the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea made it possible to conclude, on 18 June 2000, the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities and the establishment and deployment by the Security Council of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia under the terms of resolutions 1312 (2000) and 1320 (2000), which have been steadfastly supported by the United Nations. The final phase of the Mission, in which almost 4,200 troops will be deployed in both countries, will be launched shortly, according to the latest information. We hope that this momentum towards peace will continue and that a definitive settlement to this border dispute between the two countries will be found.

In Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, initiatives are under way involving both organizations.

Another important element of United Nations monitoring of African conflicts is the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close cooperation with the OAU Secretary-General, has appointed personal representatives or special envoys, inter alia, to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Ethiopia/Eritrea. This cooperation can also be seen in the United Nations support for African subregional organizations.

In this respect, I am pleased to note the establishment of such frameworks of cooperation as the coordination mechanism between the United Nations, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Government of Sierra Leone. The first meeting of this mechanism, held here in New York on 11 September, allowed us to assess the peace process in Sierra Leone and to identify urgent measures to be taken in order to implement harmoniously the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the Lomé Peace Agreement.

In spite of everything, the prevention of conflicts remains, in our opinion, the focal point for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. Indeed, it has been determined that the parties to a dispute tend to be less entrenched in the early stages and to be far more inclined to seek negotiated solutions than they are after violence erupts. Less costly from a human and financial point of view, prevention also offers the greatest possibilities of addressing the root causes of a dispute, thus providing a genuine opportunity to lay the basis of a lasting peace.

It is in this regard that, at the thirty-fifth OAU Summit in Algiers, the African heads of States and Government, having proclaimed the year 2000 as a year of peace, stability and development in Africa, are striving to join forces to prevent the emergence of new internal and inter-State conflicts and the political and social upheavals that are likely to lead to serious disturbances. The steps undertaken a few weeks ago on behalf of the pan-African organization by some 10 heads of State are part of this process and should be reinforced elsewhere and whenever necessary.

Our catchphrase should be "focus on preventive measures". In this respect, it is encouraging to note, as indicated in the Secretary-General's report, that the Department of Political Affairs is working to that end with the OAU Secretary-General and that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations has posted a military liaison officer to the OAU office in Addis Ababa in order to enhance information-sharing and coordination.

Similarly, we are pleased by the partnership established between the United Nations and the OAU through the United Nations Development Programme to strengthen OAU capacities in the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts and through the Trust Fund created to that end.

Africa's resolve to take control of its own affairs and the different lines of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU should not make us lose sight of the fact that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council. In this regard, the United Nations must firmly support the initiatives of African States to strengthen African capacity in peacekeeping and conflict settlement.

It is extremely distressing, however, to note that the international community has not always granted the kind of appropriate attention to the management of conflicts in Africa that it has always accorded to other regions of the world. Moreover, the efforts made by Africans themselves — I refer in particular to those undertaken pursuant to Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, such as the involvement of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group in Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone — are not given adequate financial and logistical support.

On the basis of this, the thirty-sixth OAU Summit, through the Lomé Declaration, invited the United Nations and the international community to accord the necessary attention to the management and settlement of conflicts in Africa and actively to support initiatives taken under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter.

We hope that a thorough review of the recommendations contained in the report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations, led by Ambassador Brahimi, will allow the international community to find appropriate solutions to the problem of peace and security that remains the central concern of African countries.

The management of emergency humanitarian situations in Africa is another important area of interaction between the United Nations and the OAU. Emerging as a result of crises and conflicts between

and within States, the issue of refugees and displaced persons has grown in importance, while the resources allocated to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have been continuously on the decline.

In this regard, I cannot fail to welcome the extensive cooperation between the OAU and UNHCR, which led to a special OAU/UNHCR meeting of government and non-government technical experts in Conakry from 7 to 9 March on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. The plan of action adopted at that meeting and later by the OAU Council of Ministers seeks to remedy the critical situation of refugees in Africa.

Moreover, natural disasters in Africa in recent years — flooding in Mozambique, the cyclone in Madagascar and drought in Ethiopia — have highlighted the need for Africa to coordinate its efforts to strengthen, with United Nations assistance, its capacities to respond more swiftly and effectively to emergencies and natural disasters.

In this regard, we would note that, in the 2000-2002 biennial action programme, drafted by the United Nations and the OAU at the conclusion of the meeting on cooperation held by their respective secretariats in Addis Ababa on 10 and 11 April, the two organizations agreed on concrete measures to strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the departments and competent bodies of the United Nations system, in particular the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

The United Nations Children's Fund, through its actions in countries affected by war, such as Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone, has focused particular attention on meeting the needs of children in the framework of humanitarian assistance. Similarly, in cooperation with the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Food Programme has sought over the past year to assist African countries that have adopted national plans to improve primary school attendance.

While conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance and development efforts all go hand in hand, we must also address the root causes of conflicts, not merely their symptoms. In other words, the effective management of conflicts must include efforts to promote sustainable development, eradicate poverty, ease the unbearable debt burden of the poor countries and encourage and follow-up measures for democratic and economic reform.

In the area of democratic reforms, the cooperation provided by the United Nations is a useful support to the efforts made in this area by African States, be it in the area of elections, good governance or respect for human rights. The electoral assistance provided by the United Nations through its Department of Political Affairs is part of the efforts undertaken by African countries themselves in setting up stable and representative Governments — an essential factor for the prevention of conflicts.

From an economic point of view, there is no need to point out that the quest for adequate and lasting solutions to the problems of growth and economic development are concerns of African States. In this respect, the OAU and African countries have, in recent years, endeavoured to begin drastic economic reforms and programmes on a continental scale: the Lagos Plan of Action is still relevant 19 years later, as well as the African Economic Community — launched in 1991; the Cairo Programme of Action of 1995 — devoted to enhancing economic and social development in Africa; and finally the African Union — a project that was launched at the special summit in Surt in September 1999 and was adopted at the last OAU Summit in Lomé. The expertise of the Economic Commission for Africa of the United Nations is particularly beneficial for the Secretary-General of the OAU in his efforts to draw up various strategies for integration within the continent.

The implementation of these different integration measures can certainly be enhanced through cooperation among African States, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund — the latter two providing the assistance to the African States that would allow them to strengthen their capacity for macroeconomic management.

Likewise, cooperation among the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the OAU and African States would allow Africa to implement the programmes mentioned above insofar as they would help African countries in multilateral trade negotiations and would allow them to further benefit from advantages offered by globalization and to be able to deal with the risks it brings.

The objectives pursued by the United Nations through its deep and multi-faceted partnership with the OAU and African countries include the effort to eradicate poverty in Africa. If, in spite of commitments made and efforts undertaken, the awaited results are late in coming, it is because of the diversity and scope of the problems.

As we are aware, the financial situation of the continent is characterized by an enormous external debt, stagnant national savings, as well as declining official development assistance and weak private capital flows.

During the review of agenda item 50, entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa," many delegations highlighted the impact of these different factors on prospects for development in Africa.

Of course the critical situation of financing for development in Africa will not improve overnight without a new political will and a renewed commitment on the part of the international community. In this regard, the United Nations plays a leading role in mobilizing the adequate resources that Africa requires. It must also play a more active role in the crusade carried out by African countries to cancel their external debt.

Likewise, since information and communication technologies can help to promote economic and social development and to alleviate poverty, the United Nations must firmly support African States in this area as well.

The high-level debate organized by the Economic and Social Council during its substantive session of the year 2000 on the theme of "Development and international cooperation in the twenty-first century: the role of information technology in the context of a knowledge-based global economy" made it possible to take stock of the importance of this matter vis-à-vis African countries and of the digital divide that separates Africa from the other regions of the world.

It is therefore desirable that initiatives designed to assist Africa, such as the first African Development Forum — organized in Addis Ababa in October 1999 under the aegis of the Economic Commission for Africa — should be often repeated. This Forum made it possible for the participants to adopt a certain number of programmes, including NGO-NET — an action group that aims to include civil society in promoting information and communication technologies in the service of development in Africa.

Health is also a very important area of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. In this regard, actions carried out by the United Nations system to control HIV/AIDS on the one hand and to fight malaria on the other are to be welcomed.

Last week, the General Assembly adopted without a vote — certainly in a spirit of solidarity with the people of Africa — resolution 55/13, in which it

> "decides to convene, as a matter of urgency, a special session of the General Assembly, from 25 to 27 June 2001, to review and address the problem of HIV/AIDS in all its aspects." (*resolution 55/13, para. 1*)

Africa expects a great deal from this meeting, in the preparation of which the Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS should play a leading role. In this regard, it warrants the support and the constant encouragement of the international community.

We must also welcome the efforts made by the World Health Organization in the area of protection and improvement of health for all, in particular the poorest and the most vulnerable. The campaigns, "Roll Back Malaria" in Africa, the programme to reduce maternal mortality through better access to appropriate care in developing countries and the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization are all telling examples of these efforts that greatly benefit Africa.

To conclude, I would like to point out that despite the continuing enhancement of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, many challenges remain. In order to overcome these challenges, we need time, resources and comprehensive initiatives that are appropriate and bold on the part of the OAU and the United Nations, its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, as well as the international community as a whole.

Africa, as was mentioned on 12 September 2000 by the current Chairman of the OAU, must face all kinds of difficulties, but it remains a region that is potentially wealthy and as a result must be assisted and supported in order to fulfil its immense potential. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU will help to achieve this objective.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): I am pleased to take the floor on behalf of the European Union. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia – and the associated countries of Cyprus, Malta and Turkey align themselves with this statement.

First of all the European Union would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report he submitted to the Assembly under this agenda item. Although much remains to be done, the report shows the extent to which the two organizations have been able to develop close ties in order to work together in various fields.

The European Union especially welcomes the ongoing cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to enhance their mutual capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts in Africa. While it feels it vital to continue holding regular meetings between the two Secretaries-General and their senior advisers, the European Union nevertheless feels that the current Chairman and members of the OAU General Secretariat could appear more often before the Security Council to provide information on their management of various African crises.

Today's debate on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU is taking place at what is still a critical time for the African continent. On the one hand, we can see some signs of political and socio-economic progress. On the other hand, more than a third of African countries are, or have recently been, involved in armed conflict. The European Union is deeply concerned over the increase in the number of armed conflicts, the constant influx of arms and military equipment and the growing role of uncontrolled rebel groups in armed conflicts.

While recalling that, under the Charter, the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, the European Union welcomes the commitment by African countries and regional organizations to play a leading role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. The European Union commends the efforts by African leaders and States, as well as by regional and subregional organizations, and in particular the Organization of African Unity, to resolve conflicts by peaceful means.

As we said last year, the European Union has a consultative mechanism with the OAU, which we wish to develop further. In particular, we are willing to strengthen dialogue with the OAU and subregional organizations on concrete ways of backing their efforts, inter alia, in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, heightening awareness of the importance of respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and promoting the rule of law and a pluralist society. The European Union has adopted a common position on human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance in Africa. It gives high priority to a positive and constructive approach, with a view to supporting efforts by the OAU, subregional groups and African countries to promote respect for human rights and good governance.

In this context, the European Union welcomes the success of the Africa-Europe Summit which was held in Cairo this year under the aegis of the European Union and the OAU. In many respects, the Cairo Declaration and the Cairo Plan of Action serve as reference documents and instruments for cooperation on security, social welfare and health, particularly in respect of the fight against HIV/AIDS. The commitments made by the African countries themselves concerning the social sector, the environment, good governance and human rights must be actively supported by the international community.

Before going into detail about various subregional situations, I would like to pinpoint three areas in which we feel all the bodies concerned, particularly the United Nations and the OAU, should cooperate more closely.

The first is the fight against trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The initiative taken by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to impose a moratorium on the import and manufacture of small arms should be actively supported and most certainly extended to other regions of Africa.

Secondly, with regard to the establishment of an integrated and coordinated mechanism to counter trafficking in raw materials and arms, the European Union welcomes the Security Council's efforts to improve its understanding of the economic origins and commercial aspects of certain African conflicts. It

notes with satisfaction the establishment for Angola of a mechanism to monitor sanctions against UNITA, the setting up of a panel to investigate the illegal exploitation of resources in the Democratic Republic of Congo; and the creation of a panel to investigate illegal trade in diamonds and arms in Sierra Leone. It is also possible to envisage having a single expert body, under the aegis of the United Nations Secretary-General, to centralize all information and draw vital comparisons between the various situations. Trafficking, by definition, knows no frontiers, and criminal interests are often the same from one crisis to another. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in this field will be decisive.

Thirdly, and lastly, there should be a much more systematic awareness campaign against the use of child soldiers in all countries in conflict. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara Otunnu, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are doing excellent groundwork, which should be more actively supported by all the political bodies involved.

The European Union attaches great importance to its regular dialogue on crisis management with the Secretary-General of the United Nations and with African regional and subregional organizations.

With regard to Sierra Leone and the situation in the three countries of the Mano River Union, the European Union is in close contact with ECOWAS. A preliminary ministerial meeting between the European Union and the West African regional organization was held in Abuja on 15 October 2000. The European Union also supports the efforts of the United Nations and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to restore peace to the country, and calls on the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) to engage in the process of demobilization, disarmament and rehabilitation provided for under the Lomé agreements. The European Union also calls on all the States in the region to scrupulously respect the embargo on arms for non-governmental forces and the embargo on non-certified diamonds imposed by Security Council resolutions 1132 (1997) and 1306 (2000).

With regard to the Horn of Africa, the European Union reiterates its full support for the diplomatic efforts by the United Nations and the OAU to resolve the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It welcomes the recent resumption of talks in Algiers with Ethiopia and Eritrea, and considers that the creation of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea should constitute a crucial factor in stabilizing the situation. The European Union calls on the parties to implement Security Council resolution 1320 (2000). It also commends the extremely positive results of the process conducted by President Guelleh of Djibouti regarding Somalia. The success of the Arta conference and the creation of new Somali institutions have won the unequivocal and firm support of the international community. The European Union calls all on all sides that have not yet done so to participate in this process.

The European Union reaffirms its support for United Nations and OAU efforts to restore peace to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region. It urges the parties to implement the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions. Together with regional players and organizations, particularly the Southern African Development Community, the OAU played an important part in bringing the parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the negotiating table in 1999 and in the signing of the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement. The OAU also made a tangible contribution to implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by sending observers, creating the Joint Military Commission and appointing the facilitator of the inter-Congolese national dialogue. The European Union supports OAU efforts and provides assistance for funding the Joint Military Commission and facilitating the national dialogue.

The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains very troubling. The Union is concerned about the dangers of a general resumption of hostilities, which could jeopardize the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). It is essential that the OAU pursue its endeavours to achieve a settlement. In this connection, we note that the States parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at the recent Maputo summit, asked the OAU to assist in appointing the new Chairman of the Joint Military Commission. We also think the OAU can play an important role in helping overcome the deadlock stalling the inter-Congolese dialogue.

Sustainable development in Africa is a priority for the European Union. The European Union's commitment to Africa is based on shared interests, values and objectives. We wish to help Africa achieve

peace and stability in order to improve the quality of life of its people. A political climate conducive to respect for human rights and good governance and an active civil society are essential for sustainable development. In this respect, development cooperation must play an important role.

The European Union remains determined to fight poverty and meet the target of halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015. The European Union remains the major source of development aid for Africa. It accounts for more than two thirds — I repeat, more than two thirds — of total official development assistance to sub-Saharan Africa. Development assistance plays a key role in underpinning the policies pursued by the African countries. This is particularly the case in the least developed countries, three quarters of which are in Africa. Donors and African countries share responsibility for ensuring that development assistance is used effectively.

With particular regard to the question of debt, I would like to stress that the European Union considers the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative an essential ingredient for fighting poverty and achieving sustainable development objectives. So far the European Union has contributed 68 per cent of the total payments made to the Trust Fund to finance the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative. It calls on eligible countries to honour their international political commitments and to take the necessary political and economic measures in order to begin this process, and to ensure that upon implementation of the HIPC Debt Initiative, the resources mobilized are allocated to social sectors such as education and health and that they promote the rule of law, good governance, the participation of civil society and human development.

In conclusion, I wish to highlight the European Union's willingness to work with all our African friends in drawing up a draft resolution, much more focused than those of years past, that could truly place emphasis on those issues that are a priority for renewed cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I wish to begin by associating myself with the statement made by the Ambassador of Togo, the country currently presiding over the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I also wish to congratulate the Secretary-General on the quality and relevance of his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The review of this item is of particular importance for Africans because, since 1960, the year of African countries' independence, our continent has been a major concern of the international community and thus holds a special place on the United Nations agenda.

This interest given to Africa stems certainly from the continent's geopolitical position, but also, and above all, from the diversity and complexity of the political, economic and social problems that African States face.

Thus, you will understand, Mr. President, the importance that African countries, joined together in the framework of our pan-African organization, attach to the consolidation, deepening and expansion of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

This multifaceted cooperation is a model that today goes beyond the narrow scope of institutional relations between two organizations and embraces the positive synergy of the activities and contributions of other actors on the international scene.

This cooperation strives to become multidimensional in order to better tackle all African aspirations to peace, stability, development, the promotion of the rule of law, the promotion of human rights and a suitable response to the irresistible march of globalization, which is shaping contemporary international relations in a new way.

In his report, the Secretary-General gives an exhaustive overview of the actions undertaken during the past year, with regard to both the actions of the Secretariat itself and those of the various programmes and bodies of the two organizations in the framework of their cooperation. In this regard, I would like to welcome and underscore in particular the decisive enthusiasm shown by both Secretaries-General in their cooperation through their regular meetings outside of OAU summits and General Assembly sessions, as well as through their regular meetings regarding crises affecting Africa in order to better coordinate their actions in the areas of policy and security.

Despite the bold reforms carried out to improve the macroeconomic situation and to democratize political systems, the African continent is still shaken by many areas of tension. For example, there are the crises in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, Angola and, Somalia and the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. In those various situations cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the area of conflict prevention and peacekeeping has been decisive in that it has made it possible to set up technical arrangements to facilitate the implementation of ceasefire agreements and to deploy joint civilian and military missions, thereby strengthening African capacities for conflict prevention and management.

We should also welcome the wholehearted support the United Nations provides the OAU within the framework of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. In particular, we appreciate the United Nations interest in the OAU Peace Fund, whose resources, acquired thanks to the generosity of donor countries, have helped to improve the capacity for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa.

With regard to following up major African crises, my delegation notes with satisfaction that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in close cooperation with the OAU Secretary-General, has appointed personal representatives or envoys to Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and the Central African Republic.

These various achievements are clearly encouraging, and should be attributed to the cooperation between the two organizations and the leadership of the two Secretaries-General. But this progress, as positive as it is, has not served to stem the dissatisfaction felt by Africa towards an international community that is often too reluctant to manage serious crises that break out in Africa. The relative failure of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and, especially, the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the deployment of a United Nations mission has been indefinitely put off, are perfect illustrations of how the United Nations often fails in its duty to assist Africa in the way Africans expect of the Organization and the international community.

It is in that context that Senegal congratulates the members of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations. Through the report known as the Brahimi report, the Panel's relevant recommendations offer the United Nations new possibilities to reduce tensions and manage conflicts wisely in order to allow countries ravaged by war to turn their efforts towards development. This is how Senegal sees the import of the Brahimi report and its relevant recommendations.

Indeed, without peace, security and stability, development becomes empty rhetoric. But without development, peace can only be precarious. This approach, which is both didactic and dialectic, must henceforth become the foundation of a new United Nations agenda for the economic and social development of Africa. This approach is starting to be implemented jointly by African countries and the operational agencies of the United Nations system, following the example of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund and, above all, the United Nations International Development Organization, which, in close cooperation with African countries, has launched a project called Alliance for Africa's Industrialization.

Other agencies of the United Nations, such as the World Health Organization and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, are also applying themselves to the fight against the AIDS pandemic, which is a true scourge in Africa. We must also mention the assistance of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on behalf of the 7 million refugees and displaced persons on the continent through its programmes to assist such people and to help them return to their countries of origin.

My delegation is convinced that the United Nations can do more, and wants to do better, for Africa. That was the wish expressed by the participants in the Millennium Summit in the final Declaration, which devoted an entire section to the specific needs of Africa, which must be harmoniously integrated into the world economy. We hope that this commitment of the international community will not be in vain, and that it will soon lead to concrete action, given that Africa is ready to undertake its share of responsibility.

That responsibility is in evidence in the historic decision taken by OAU heads of State and Government at Lomé last July to set up the African Economic Union

to forge their common destiny. Through that extremely significant political act, Africa is today more than ever ready to mobilize all its resources to tackle the many challenges of the twenty-first century through greater political, economic and social integration.

It goes without saying that the fulfilment of such an ambition for Africa requires time, energy and true political will on the part of Africans. It also requires closer and more dynamic cooperation and a comprehensive, concrete response from this Organization, from the entire United Nations system and from the international community at large. My delegation therefore earnestly appeals to States Members of the United Nations to support the draft resolution to be submitted on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Darwish (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to convey our thanks to the Secretary-General for the comprehensive report (A/55/498) before the Assembly on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The report is of particular importance at a time when increasing responsibilities are being entrusted to the OAU and when it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations in the diplomatic, political, military, economic, social, development and other spheres. Such cooperation is to the benefit of Africa and helps enhance the structural and institutional capacities of the OAU — which, in Egypt's view, constitutes the ultimate goal.

I wish therefore to hail the ongoing efforts of the secretariats of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity to strengthen the mechanisms for cooperation and consultation between the two organizations, which include at least twice-yearly meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU: once during the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, and once during the General Assembly session at New York.

The report of the Secretary-General indicates that in its programme of cooperation with the United Nations for 2000-2002, the OAU secretariat has highlighted a number of priority issues in which current programmes need to be enhanced in order to reach the desired goals. These include: debt relief, debt cancellation and increasing resource flows; implementation of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community — the Abuja Treaty; health issues such as combating HIV/AIDS and malaria; issues of democracy such as good governance and respect for human rights; and enhancing the capacity of the Organization of African Unity to respond rapidly to crises and to engage in conflict management.

There is no doubt that Africa faces formidable challenges on all those issues and that the burden of armed conflicts under way in various parts of the continent is growing heavier. The delegation of Egypt looks to the world Organization to formulate specific joint programmes to attain the ambitious goals that have been identified with respect to each of those issues. It is our hope that all organs and agencies of the United Nations system will participate in those programmes and endeavours until they achieve their desired goals.

We hope that coming years will see a strengthening of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations in all those priority fields. We hope too that they will see further efforts to improve the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Unity so that it can rely on its own resources in meeting the challenges facing the continent, specifically the settlement and management of armed conflicts. In that context, we call on the United Nations to lend particular support to the activities of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, by developing its capacities in the spheres of early warning, logistical support and technical assistance, training of civilian and military personnel, and encouraging donor countries to contribute generously to the various trust funds set up by the United Nations and by the Organization of African Unity towards that noble objective.

As we see from the report of the Secretary-General, over the past year the Organization of African Unity has made commendable efforts in taking the initiative in settling armed conflicts in Africa. Africa's political will has been reflected in positions taken on a number of issues: in West Africa, the Sierra Leone conflict; in Central Africa, the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi; and in the Horn of Africa, the settlement of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the establishment of Somalia's first national Government since 1991.

We welcome efforts to enhance the capacity of the Organization of African Unity to maintain peace

and security in Africa, especially through support for the OAU Centre for Conflict Management, located in Addis Ababa. At the same time, we stress that Africa's assumption of a greater role in this sphere must not be at the expense of the role played by the United Nations. Nor should it marginalize the United Nations, which is the organization with sole responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the relationship between the OAU and the United Nations, the latter should not rely on the former; the OAU should rely on the United Nations to settle wars and disputes on the continent. In our view, the United Nations response to crises in Africa indicates that the Organization has actually begun to shoulder its responsibility after a period of inaction during which we saw the international community grow lax in its reaction to international crises in Africa. The United Nations took the initiative in settling the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and set up the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea to maintain the peace following the 18 June 2000 signing at Algiers of an Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities. And rather than withdrawing from Sierra Leone when crisis erupted in that friendly country, the United Nations bolstered its military presence and intensified its efforts to put an end to the horrible war there; it has moreover begun to deal with the regional ramifications of the Sierra Leone crisis.

It is our hope that those examples reflect a healthy, positive approach. Here, we express our hope that the United Nations will persist in its efforts and show the world that it is a universal international organization that addresses African crises on an equal footing with other crises, such as those of Kosovo and East Timor.

I wish in conclusion to reaffirm our confidence in and appreciation for the Secretary-General's noble efforts to intensify the strong relations between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in all spheres. Here, we reiterate the readiness of Egypt, as an active member of both organizations, to participate fully in activities to help attain the priority goals that have been identified for enhancing our continent-wide organization and for enabling it to play its rightful role in the international community.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I should like to say that my delegation associates itself with the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Just one week ago, the General Assembly considered the question of peace and development in Africa on the basis of the conclusions of the Working Group set up to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report (A/52/871) of the Secretary-General of April 1998. Today, Africa is once again on the agenda of this Assembly, from the perspective of cooperation between the continent-wide Organization of African Unity and the United Nations. In this connection, my delegation would like to thank the Secretary-General for his detailed and comprehensive report on this question.

Algeria held the chairmanship of the OAU last year, and I should like to share with the Assembly what we learned from that experience and offer a few suggestions that we believe might help to improve the substance of our cooperation and its effectiveness in attaining the goals that have been set.

Today, cooperation between the two organizations has moved beyond a strictly institutional framework; it is now part of a new context characterized by a beneficial international awareness of the many challenges facing the African continent. Indeed, Africa is still affected by numerous areas of conflict, poverty that affects more than one in three people, a heavy debt burden that jeopardizes any effort to undertake economic development and, above all else, the terrible tragedy of the spread of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the continent.

It should be noted, however, that this new awareness on the part of the international community, and its commitment to help Africa face the many threats and dangers facing the continent, is slow in developing and in manifesting itself in a consistent manner in real deeds. It is therefore essential for the commitments made by the international community finally to be translated into effective action.

For its part, Africa must continue to shoulder its responsibility — as, indeed, it has never ceased to do in the past — in the main areas of conflict prevention, peacekeeping throughout the continent, the establishment of democratic institutions within countries and the creation of conditions propitious to economic recovery and development, without which economic and social progress cannot take place.

During its chairmanship of the OAU last year, Algeria spared no effort to coordinate African action at the continent-wide level, consolidate the structures and methods used by the OAU and provide it with the means and resources that it needed. In that context, Algeria attached great importance to political cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the United Nations, whose competence, experience and expertise give it a major advantage.

The United Nations was therefore involved in all OAU efforts to resolve various African conflicts. Algeria would like to pay particular tribute to the United Nations Secretary-General, the Government of the United States and the European Union for their constant support for our efforts to mediate the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; we regularly kept the Secretary-General and the Security Council informed about developments in the peace process.

My country's efforts led to the conclusion, on 18 June 2000 in Algiers, of a ceasefire agreement that opened up the road for an equitable and lasting political settlement to the fratricidal conflict. The resumption of direct discussions between the two countries last October will speed up the settlement of outstanding issues. In order to consolidate the current peace process, it is important to implement the provisions of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000) by quickly deploying the 4,200 troops as part of the broadened mandate of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

The contribution of the universal organization, that is the United Nations, working alongside the OAU and other regional African organizations, to resolving other conflicts in Africa has also been demonstrated in Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia. A real partnership is now under way between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations in Sierra Leone through the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). The standing mechanism for consultation and cooperation set up in this regard has made it possible to better control the situation in that country. Likewise, last Friday the Security Council expressed its support for a system of strategic cooperation involving various components of the Organization, as well as troop-contributing countries and the members of the Economic Community of West African States, and this approach will assist in speeding up the return to peace in Sierra Leone.

We are still worried, however, by the reappearance of the spectre of indifference on the part of the developed countries with regard to peace missions in Africa. The difficulties encountered by the United Nations in finding sufficient troops for UNAMSIL — to take just one example — following authorization by the Security Council for the deployment of more than 20,000, are a real cause for concern.

The momentum for peace that emerged recently in Somalia, following the initiative of Djibouti, must be given greater support so that thanks to the re-establishment of a national authority, the Somali people can finally regain peace and stability and begin to rebuild their country, devastated by more than a decade of civil war.

Another main aspect of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU relates to economic and social development. The majority of African States are engaged in economic recovery processes, which must be supported by the United Nations and the international community. Progress has been made in some countries, but the overall situation of African economies is still of overwhelming concern, and the continent continues to face many problems, including debt, the drying up of resources and persistent poverty.

Efforts are being made at the national level, yet, paradoxically, official development assistance is still decreasing, and the commitment made by rich countries to commit 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product is far from being fulfilled. Furthermore, as the Secretary-General noted in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, even when aid is forthcoming, 70 per cent of it is redirected back to the rich countries through the hiring of consultants and other technical advisers.

The main economic challenge facing Africa today is, without doubt, the external debt, which has been estimated at more than $350 billion. This is a heavy burden and represents an unprecedented haemorrhage of its resources. At the extraordinary OAU summit held in Surt in 1999, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and South African President Thabo Mbeki were called on by their peers to defend the request to the developed countries and multilateral institutions to cancel African debt. While it is true that progress has been made, inasmuch as creditor countries are more aware of the vital importance to Africa of this matter, it

is also true that the timid initiatives taken in the past few months to ease the debt burden of some African countries, among them the least developed countries, fall far short of what had been hoped for.

Likewise, there has been a constant erosion in the resources of the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies in the United Nations system, which has forced these bodies to make difficult choices. This situation must be resolved in order to enable them to play their role in supporting efforts at recovery in Africa.

Humanitarian work is another equally important area in the framework of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. The African continent today is host to more than half of the approximately 20 million refugees throughout the world, yet Africa does not receive the attention it should given its truly tragic situation, nor does it get a fair share of the resources allocated in the context of humanitarian assistance. My delegation would like the situation to be remedied, through, inter alia, the implementation of the plan of action for African refugees that emanated from the joint OAU-United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) meeting of March 2000.

As we have seen, there are many multidimensional areas for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. They deal, inter alia, with questions as varied as the peaceful settlement of disputes, institutional assistance, support for economic programmes, assistance to refugees and the combat against epidemics.

Experience has shown the need for, and the usefulness of, such cooperation, which, despite our common will to promote it, continues to feel the effects of the scarcity of resources. Only with assistance from the United Nations will it be able to implement its overall mission and, in respect to the issues we are dealing with today, to bring to a successful conclusion the many projects in which it is involved in the context of cooperation with the OAU.

In this respect, Africa has genuine hopes for the forthcoming special conferences of the United Nations on the AIDS pandemic and on financing for development. We expect from these conferences and from our partners specific commitments and innovative proposals that will lead to concrete actions to help Africa.

In conclusion, let me say that at the Millennium Summit, world leaders, meeting on a unique and historic occasion, made solemn commitments to support peace and development in the African continent in particular. We hope that the Declaration adopted on that occasion will herald a new era in our collective effort to take up the many challenges and counter the many threats facing peace and development in Africa. The United Nations, whose central mission was recognized in the Millennium Declaration, must play a paramount role in this respect.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): As I stressed at last year's meeting, the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing the issues of conflict prevention and economic development, can never be overstated. Japan therefore supports the efforts to enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), as outlined in the Secretary-General's report.

The OAU has long been engaged in activities to advance the cause of peace and prosperity in Africa. Its efforts were instrumental in facilitating the peace agreements on the conflicts in Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and, most recently, between Ethiopia and Eritrea. The cessation of hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea is indeed encouraging, and I wish to commend the OAU for its diligent efforts to date. However, further efforts by all concerned — including the United Nations Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea, led by our former colleague, Ambassador Legwaila — are required in order to attain durable peace between the two countries.

The OAU's comprehensive framework of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa is important testimony to the determination on the part of African countries to advance the cause of peace on the continent. Yet it is obvious that the OAU needs greater cooperation and support from the international community. United Nations cooperation with the OAU is particularly essential in order to ensure that the comprehensive framework functions effectively. The support of other partners in the developed world is also indispensable.

Japan, for its part, is prepared to assist the OAU in its efforts for conflict prevention, management and resolution. It has already extended a number of

financial contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, which have been utilized for various conflict prevention and democratization activities. Most recently, Japan assisted the OAU peacekeeping mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, particularly in establishing the OAU liaison offices in Addis Ababa and Asmara. We remain committed to supporting the OAU's efforts in pursuit of peace.

There is another dimension in which Japan facilitates cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. The so-called Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, which Japan has been promoting since 1993, is contributing greatly to cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The TICAD process focuses on sustainable development in Africa as well as on conflict prevention. It also supports the OAU's Comprehensive Framework. Moreover, the participation of several Asian countries in the TICAD process is broadening the base of support for African development and promoting cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system.

I want to remind the Assembly in this context that Foreign Minister Yohei Kono announced in his statement to the General Assembly this September that Japan had decided to hold a ministerial meeting on African development in fiscal year 2001, with a view to making preparations for the third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD III). We hope that the proposed ministerial meeting will add further political momentum to the TICAD process and help strengthen cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations system.

As the Millennium Declaration rightly underlined, Africa will require special attention in the coming years in many different contexts, including efforts to eradicate poverty and debt, prevent conflict and address the issue of small arms, and combat AIDS and other diseases. Against this backdrop, the responsibility of the OAU is greater than ever, as is the need for the international community, and the United Nations in particular, to extend support and cooperation to this valuable African organization.

Japan, for its part, is prepared to do its best in order to support the OAU and African countries in their struggle with the difficult problems they face.

Mr. Jerandi (Tunisia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Allow me at the outset to express to the Secretary-General, on behalf of the Tunisian delegation, our gratitude and appreciation for his valuable report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and for his efforts to promote this cooperation.

Ever since its inception, the OAU has reflected the aspirations of African peoples and countries for a united continent. It has played a crucial role in asserting the legitimate political aspirations of the continent and in promoting rapprochement, solidarity and cooperation among African peoples and countries. It has served as an ideal collective African framework for action.

Tunisia attaches particular importance to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and to means for enhancing this cooperation. We welcome the priority status that Africa has acquired on the United Nations agenda, especially as a result of the many programmes and initiatives related to this continent that the United Nations and its specialized agencies have established and of the ongoing coordination between the two organizations on issues relating to the continent, especially in the fields of international peace and security and economic and social development.

The report of the Secretary-General highlights many of the areas and levels of cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. While we welcome all the achievements that have been made, we call for a follow-up and for a continuation of these efforts in order to promote cooperation and coordination, since Africa and its regional organization face many challenges that require greater commitment on the part of the international community, especially by the United Nations.

My delegation welcomes the practice of regular consultations that both Secretaries-General have consistently followed. We also welcome the discussions held by high officials from the two organizations in certain areas. These will strengthen the cooperative ties between the organizations.

The African continent has been working in the context of the OAU and other subregional organizations, first, by relying on its own resources in order to address its own problems, and, secondly, by

relying on the solidarity and support of the international community.

In recent years the African continent has witnessed many acute struggles that threatened peace and security and led to difficult humanitarian situations, with tragic economic and social dimensions. The Security Council, as the highest authority in the field of the maintenance of international peace and security, has attached great importance to these struggles. The numerous meetings that the Council has devoted to addressing these issues this year have provided many opportunities for assessing and organizing cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of peace and security in Africa and the means to support them.

Africa has made many efforts to contribute to the settlement of conflicts in a way that guarantees peace and security, supports stability and provides for development. However, despite the attempts at conciliation and the initiatives undertaken by many African leaders, in coordination with the United Nations and the OAU, many of the complex conflicts have yet to be fully resolved.

Africa has given priority to the issue of dispute settlement and to conflict prevention, management and resolution. The mechanism created by the OAU for this purpose has played a positive role in this field, despite limited resources. This mechanism reflects the resolve of African States to rely on their own resources to solve the problems of the continent. At the same time, these States remain keenly interested in coordinating their efforts with the United Nations.

In this context we would like to reaffirm Africa's determination to shoulder its responsibilities. However, this determination should not relieve the international community and the United Nations of their responsibilities.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of peace and security has resulted in many achievements in past years. These efforts should be enhanced. We call upon the United Nations and its Member States to increase their support for the OAU in order to strengthen its institutional capacities.

In recent years Africa has made many efforts in the field of development, enhancing the principles of dialogue, democracy and human rights, and supporting regional cooperation and economic integration by implementing the Abuja Agreement, which created the African Economic Community. We hope our partners will continue to provide their support for this objective.

In this regard, we look forward to a prompt solution to the debt problem and to more support for the efforts to eradicate poverty and disease, open international markets to African products and attract greater direct foreign investment. We would like to express our appreciation for the numerous initiatives to enhance sustainable development in Africa undertaken by the United Nations, its specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions. We call for greater coordination for the success of these initiatives. My delegation would like to praise the positive initiatives undertaken by many of our African partners in order to develop and increase cooperation and coordination.

As the United Nations and the OAU prepare to move to the next phase of their cooperation and coordination, we hope that, after a review of past achievements, cooperation will be enhanced and coordination will be based on various political, economic and social elements so as to serve international peace, security, stability and development in Africa, enhance the role of the United Nations and advance its principles and purposes.

Mr. Shinkaiye (Nigeria): Nigeria wishes at the outset to express its full support for the statement made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We also thank the Secretary-General for his detailed report on cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. We request that all the programmes identified in the report be implemented.

My delegation attaches great importance to this agenda item for many reasons, which we need not recount here. Suffice it to say that cooperation between the United Nations, the world's only truly universal organization, and the OAU, the only continental organization that binds the variegated regions and peoples of Africa together, has not only symbolic, but also substantive significance for us in Africa.

It is commonly acknowledged — and we in Africa are the first to admit this — that our continent constitutes the weakest segment of the chain that links the global family of nations and peoples. The myriad problems that currently afflict the continent are very well known and have, in fact, been the subject of intense debate and discussion at this and other sessions.

Only last week, this Assembly devoted time to the discussion of how to tackle the continent's many conflicts and promote sustainable development.

Irrespective of the nature, sources or causes of the problems and challenges facing Africa, one fact is incontrovertible. Many of these problems, by their very nature, cannot be resolved successfully by African countries acting alone or even acting together. They have to be resolved in cooperation with the continent's development partners and the wider international community. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity should therefore, among other objectives, be aimed at realizing this goal. Besides, this cooperation is a vivid demonstration of the principles of international solidarity and testimony to Africa's shared humanity with the rest of the global community.

Over the years, cooperation between the two organizations, begun in 1965 and based primarily on the principle of mutual respect, has grown wider and deeper to encompass very many issues and concerns not even contemplated at the beginning. It has also grown to include not only cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations alone, but also between the OAU and the United Nations specialized agencies. The Nigerian delegation welcomes this development.

Nevertheless, we urge that we do not rest on our oars, as the African situation calls for not only an intensification of this cooperation, but, more important, a rigorous review of its content and scope. At no time has this cooperation been more urgently needed than now, given the worsening situation of the African continent, which is increasingly being further marginalized. It is for this reason that we welcome the activities of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU, which has led to enhanced cooperation, coordination and exchange of information with the OAU in a number of areas.

It is the view of the Nigerian delegation that a number of priority areas have to be identified if the cooperative activities between the United Nations and the OAU are to be well focused and well targeted. Here, we have in mind such areas as capacity-building in all its ramifications, but especially in the areas of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace-building, including the question of refugees and displaced persons. Other areas should include the promotion of good governance, transparency and accountability; poverty eradication; control and management of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria and major infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis; as well as issues pertaining to economic growth and development, especially the external debt crisis which the continent currently faces. This list of issues is, of course, not exhaustive, but only indicative.

Africa's capacity for dealing with these issues has to be enhanced if we are committed to arresting the continent's downward slide. The emergence of a few pockets of progress and hope on the continent, while welcomed, is nowhere near a critical mass that can give the process of rejuvenation a momentum of its own to become sustainable.

In further fine-tuning of the existing cooperation between the two organizations, the Nigerian delegation would like to see greater assistance given by the United Nations to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, given the ravages caused by the many conflicts that have put Africa's efforts to reverse its underdevelopment at enormous risk. In this connection, we draw attention to the resolutions and decisions taken by African leaders at the Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, which met in Lomé, Togo, from 10 to 12 July 2000, and especially the Solemn Declaration on the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa. We hope that the expected assistance from the international community, including the United Nations, will be forthcoming to enable full implementation of that Declaration.

Allow me to refer to a few specific areas in which cooperation between the two organizations has led to very positive developments. I have in mind the collaborative efforts between the United Nations and the OAU in conflict management and resolution. This has not only resulted in a peace agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea, but promises to provide a durable solution to this sad conflict between two brother nations. Nigeria applauds the efforts deployed by both organizations which have made this possible, and we urge that the process be pursued to its logical conclusion.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea peace process is a clear indication of what benefits the world can derive when our global Organization works closely with regional or continental organizations, such as the OAU, in dealing

with a serious crisis. Nigeria therefore fully supports the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in dealing with other conflicts, such as those in Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Western Sahara.

Nigeria, however, urges the United Nations to also involve the OAU more closely in its peace efforts in Sierra Leone. We recall that the OAU, like the United Nations, fully participated in the process leading to the Lomé Peace Agreement, and both organizations are guarantors of the Agreement. We admit that the OAU itself was somewhat laid back after the agreement was signed and does not have the resources to play a more visible role. Nevertheless, we believe that the OAU can help, and the United Nations should work closely with the OAU Secretary General's Special Envoy on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Kingsley Mamabolo of South Africa.

Finally, on the subject of conflicts in Africa, Nigeria appeals to the United Nations to take a new look at the situation in Somalia, that unfortunate country that has been ravaged by conflict for so long. As the Central Organ of the OAU Conflict Management Mechanism recently urged, every support should be given to the recently elected Somali President and the Transitional National Assembly in order to ensure that national unity and central Government are restored in the country. The process clearly shows that the Somali people want peace, and the world should not abandon them. Due tribute should be paid to the President of Djibouti for his valiant effort in furtherance of this noble objective. He has helped to give hope to the people of Somalia and deserves our commendation.

Nigeria welcomes the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in response to the General Assembly's request that the United Nations and its specialized agencies — notably the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and others — should take appropriate steps to complement, in a coordinated manner, the fight against HIV/AIDS. In this regard, we support the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, which is organizing in December this year its second annual African Development Forum, the theme this year being "AIDS: The Greatest Leadership Challenge." The OAU is involved in the programme. We appeal to the United Nations to reciprocate by joining hands with the OAU, which will organize in Abuja, Nigeria, some time next year, an African summit on HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases. It is our hope that, with such collaborative efforts, Africa will be in a position to halt the HIV/AIDS virus, which is currently ravaging the continent.

The Nigerian delegation would like to conclude by commending the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to keep African issues on the front burner of the United Nations agenda, despite the critical resource constraints that our Organization continues to face. The Governments and peoples of Africa are truly indebted to him and to all the Governments that have demonstrated faith in Africa's capacity to overcome its current multifaceted challenges. Although the primary responsibility for meeting these challenges lies with the continent and its leaders, they can be truly addressed only in concert with Africa's development partners and the wider international community.

Our world will certainly be a better place when Africa takes its rightful place as a respected member of the global family. We look forward to that day, and it is our belief that this is a realizable objective. The United Nations and its specialized agencies have a responsibility and indeed a duty to support Africa's political, social and economic recovery, as was rightly agreed by world leaders in the Millennium Declaration which they recently adopted. Let us all resolve to fully implement that Declaration.

Mr. Hønningstad (Norway): Allow me first to welcome this opportunity again to discuss "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". The mere fact that much of Africa is still ravaged by serious armed conflicts, droughts and continued underdevelopment underlines the great importance of strong and practical cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Norway believes that such cooperation is beneficial to both organizations and will further their high ambitions to assist conflict prevention and resolution and the economic and social development of the African nations.

Norway has called for strengthened coordination and increased cooperation between the two organizations, and is therefore encouraged by the strong commitment of the Secretary-General to enhancing such cooperation. The increased practical

implementation of cooperation arrangements over the last few years constitutes a strong platform for an even closer relationship. Indeed, Norway will push for such enhanced cooperation and coordination when we take our seat on the Security Council. The increasing participation of the OAU in the United Nations, its organs and specialized agencies makes a very valuable contribution towards this aim.

Much has happened since the decision by the OAU in 1993 to relinquish its non-intervention policy and to establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The OAU is now actively engaged in trying to solve all ongoing conflicts on the continent. Although much remains to be done to have a fully operational OAU Mechanism, assistance from the United Nations and bilateral partners of the OAU has strengthened its capacity. However, further efforts by the United Nations to assist the OAU in enhancing this capacity and facilitating closer cooperation is called for. Norway will continue to support the Mechanism, and calls for United Nations technical assistance and for staff exchange programmes to be put in place.

The effects of the many ongoing conflicts in Africa only exacerbate poverty and underdevelopment, the HIV/Aids pandemic, the high debt burden, drought and hunger on the African continent. The coordinated efforts of the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity to resolve the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict is one encouraging example of close cooperation in the cause of peace. Although the stakes are high, the expectation that the conflict will be solved should, hopefully, be met. Through their combined efforts, the two organizations should be able to convince the parties of the benefits of peace and the need for cooperation.

The conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, the Sudan, Sierra Leone and Somalia are still unresolved and require the attention of a joint United Nations-OAU effort as well as the constructive engagement of the parties to the conflicts and all Member States in the region. The United Nations and the OAU should take the lead in urging African leaders to become leaders for peace and development. Without the strong commitment of African leaders to peace, the role of the United Nations and the OAU will only be one of "damage control".

On a positive note, Norway would like to mention the close cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in the areas of eradication of small arms and landmines. Norway urges the organizations to cooperate even more closely to alleviate the burden of destruction caused by mines and small arms in countries on the African continent. Norway takes this opportunity to point out the positive engagement by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in agreeing to a moratorium on the sale of and trafficking in small arms. This should serve as an example to be followed by others.

The OAU is currently undergoing a restructuring process to which a group of countries — the Friends of the OAU — has been contributing. When this restructuring process has been implemented the "new" OAU will, hopefully, be better equipped to face the challenges of the new millennium. The possibility of further developing the concept of the Friends of the OAU — with United Nations participation — should be considered. This could enhance cooperation of all external organizations and countries with the OAU. It would also alleviate the administrative burden on the OAU Secretariat. This would allow the OAU to develop a more programmatic approach to its activities, which could enhance the organization's efficiency. Norway will strongly support such an initiative and encourage the United Nations to work with the OAU to develop such an approach.

Cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU is especially important in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. However, with regard to regional and subregional efforts to achieve stronger economic and political integration, the United Nations could also play a pivotal role in assisting the OAU and the subregional African organizations to realize this. The contribution of subregional efforts towards the goal of an African Economic Community should be encouraged. Thus, a stronger United Nations supportive role for economic integration should be emphasized, and stronger OAU involvement in the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) should be fostered.

The Norwegian Government would like to emphasize that the United Nations should play a stronger role in coordinating development assistance to the African continent. We would also like to forge closer ties of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. Such efforts, combined with a

continuation of bilateral development cooperation and assistance through various United Nations initiatives, show our strong commitment to African development. We therefore urge the different United Nations agencies to intensify the coordination of their regional programmes in Africa and to strengthen their harmonization with African regional and subregional programmes.

Let me close by recalling chapter VII of the Millennium Declaration, "Meeting the special needs of Africa". For the goals and aspirations of this chapter of the Declaration to come true and be speedily implemented, we will all depend on a new partnership with Africa. The OAU should play a pivotal role in such a partnership.

Mr. Hussein (Ethiopia): At the outset, I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. As in previous years, the report provides a clear description of the activities undertaken by the two organizations in the framework of their ongoing cooperation.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the increased cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, as set out in the Secretary-General's report. We welcome the continued practice of holding regular consultations between the secretariats of the two organizations, the most recent example being the meeting held at the headquarters of the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, on 10 and 11 April 2000. As agreed by the two secretariats, the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity needs to be further consolidated. This can be done by placing greater emphasis on steps that will enhance the institutional capacity of the OAU and the mobilization of resources for the implementation of the priorities and programme areas identified by the meeting.

Regarding the mechanisms for enhancing United Nations-OAU cooperation, the establishment of the United Nations Liaison Office with the OAU definitely constitutes an important step. We note that the Liaison Office has been entrusted with important tasks that need to be undertaken in close cooperation and coordination with the OAU.

My delegation attaches particular importance to the cooperation between the two organizations in the maintenance of peace and security, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. During the past year, the OAU has continued its efforts aimed at the peaceful settlement of conflicts in the continent.

My country fully supports these efforts of the OAU, and has on various occasions made its own contributions to the resolution of conflicts in different parts of Africa. With respect to the crisis between Ethiopia and Eritrea, Ethiopia has demonstrated its full respect for and commitment to the OAU by cooperating with its efforts to resolve the crisis. These efforts of the OAU, with the cooperation and assistance of the United Nations and other interested parties, led to the signing of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities between Ethiopia and Eritrea in Algiers on 18 June 2000. The Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities provides, that a "Peacekeeping Mission shall be deployed by the United Nations under the auspices of OAU". (*S/2000/627, enclosure, para. 2*) It further stipulates, in paragraph 4, that "The size and the composition of the Peacekeeping Mission shall be adapted to the mission assigned to it and shall be determined by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and OAU, with the acceptance of the two Parties." Furthermore, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Agreement of Cessation of Hostilities, the OAU and the United Nations commit themselves to guarantee the respect for this commitment undertaken by the parties in the Agreement.

Against this backdrop, the Security Council, in paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 1320 (2000), establishing the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, requested the Secretary-General of the United Nations "to coordinate with the Organization of African Unity in the implementation of the Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities".

In this regard, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the Secretary-General for his continued efforts, including his appointment of Ambassador Mohamed Sahnoun as his Special Envoy in dealing with the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to continue collaborating with the OAU in supporting the subsequent phase of its mediation efforts in the implementation of the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities.

In the area of economic and social development, Africa continues to face serious challenges. Despite the efforts of most African countries, the economic

situation in the continent remains precarious, and economic recovery and development continue to be severely hindered by multiple factors. The persistence of conflicts, debt burden, the decline in official development assistance, the net outflow of resources and the question of access to world markets, to mention just a few factors, are paralysing growth and development in Africa. As these challenges continue to grow, the situation in the continent, including the role that the United Nations could play in cooperation with the OAU, needs a close and an objective evaluation.

In spite of the challenges and difficulties, especially in mobilizing international support for Africa, the United Nations has remained engaged through its various agencies in many vital areas related to African economic recovery and development. In this context, my delegation also acknowledges the important role of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, which, in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the African Development Bank, continues to play a crucial role in the establishment and consolidation of the African Economic Community and the subregional economic communities, which will serve as building blocks for the Community. Cooperation over the past year between the OAU and various United Nations agencies, such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and others, has also been quite encouraging.

With regard to issues related to social matters, we welcome the achievements made through the OAU's cooperation with, among others, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. The progress that the OAU and UNHCR have made with respect to the welfare of refugees in Africa is particularly worth mentioning. Similarly, the important support of WHO in critical areas such as polio eradication, malaria prevention and control and the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Africa needs to be further enhanced. In this respect, we welcome the establishment of the United Nations-OAU task force that would articulate a plan of action in the fight against HIV/AIDS, to be achieved, we hope, in the next two years. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to United Nations agencies, the international community and donor countries to give more attention to Africa's struggle against the HIV/AIDS scourge, which is afflicting the continent to an alarming degree.

Since its establishment in 1963, the Organization of African Unity has endeavoured in pursuit of the lofty objectives envisioned by the founding fathers to meet the multifaceted challenges facing Africa. In the area of peace and security, the OAU's efforts have culminated in the setting up of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, while in the sphere of economic development and regional economic integration, the conclusion of the Abuja Treaty and the establishment of the African Economic Community mark yet other milestone achievements.

These achievements and the efforts of Africa in general could be sustained and further enhanced only in a favourable international environment of genuine partnership on the part of the rest of the world. In this regard, the role of the United Nations and its cooperation with the OAU will remain indispensable in the years to come.

Mr. Urib (Namibia): Allow me first of all to associate my delegation with the statement made by the representative of Togo on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. The report covers a wide range of issues which are important to both organizations. Cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU will strengthen the capacity of the OAU in responding to the increasing needs of its member States, and we believe in this way it will contribute to attainment of the goals of the United Nations.

In this context, we welcome the ongoing contacts and consultations between the United Nations Department of Political Affairs and the OAU Permanent Observer Mission in New York. Similarly, cooperation between the OAU and the special envoys of the Secretary-General of the United Nations provide an important and direct link, especially in the area of conflict prevention and management.

We note the contribution of United Nations experts in the design of peace agreements in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to mention but two examples. However, timely action by the United Nations Security Council in the implementation of peace agreements in Africa is crucial and can either make or break those agreements. We also concur with the view of the Secretary-General that continuous provision of much-needed support for peacekeeping activities in Africa is vital. The Brahimi report speaks eloquently to these issues, and we must all ensure the early implementation of the recommendations contained therein.

In that connection, we reiterate our call on the international community — especially the donor countries — to contribute to the Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa, as well as to the OAU Peace Fund aimed at building African peacekeeping capacities. The need for additional financial resources to enhance cooperation cannot be overemphasized.

The humanitarian needs of African refugees and internally displaced persons also need concerted efforts by the international community. We have said it before, and we would like to reiterate again, that the Organization and, indeed, the international community, cannot afford to give up on African refugees and other displaced persons in various parts of the African continent. The provision of support by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to the OAU in developing its institutional capacity for humanitarian coordination and exchange of early-warning information is therefore crucial, and must be strengthened.

We must do everything to eliminate the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons in Africa and the world at large. We must also recognize the disproportionately high price paid by countries hosting refugees. In the case of Africa, many of those countries are among the least developed on the continent. Thus the problem of refugees places an added burden on their already weak economies. We call for increased support to those countries. We also recognize the difficulties faced by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Africa

as to enable it to cater to the needs of refugees in

Notwithstanding the current economic and social difficulties, many African countries are making tremendous efforts to achieve sustained economic growth and sustainable development in Africa. The establishment of the African Economic Community is therefore an important phase of the African development process that will assist in consolidating the efforts of African countries to revive and develop African economies. In that context, the Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa can make a meaningful contribution through the full and effective implementation of the programme for the Decade.

Furthermore, support to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is also critical to enable that organization to carry out its programmes in Africa. In addition, the continued cooperation between the OAU and the secretariat of the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development is welcome, for it contributes to assisting African countries in multilateral trade negotiations. We call upon the international community to support the capacity of African countries to derive optimal benefits from globalization and to deal with the risks and challenges it poses. In that connection, the early implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration will certainly hasten the achievement of that objective.

Furthermore, we welcome the collaboration between the OAU and the World Bank, as well as the International Monetary Fund's technical assistance to OAU member States to strengthen their capacities for macroeconomic management. We thank them and all our development partners for their invaluable support and contributions to African development.

But the list of African problems is indeed very long. In addition to the economic, humanitarian and security problems I have referred to, Africa must deal with the decimating onslaught of HIV/AIDS and the devastation of malaria, among other health hazards. The continent is truly going through its darkest hour. This is therefore no time for ordinary solutions to African problems, but an hour for extraordinary and visionary efforts on the part of both Africans and the international community alike. What Africa needs is nothing short of a Marshall Plan.

We believe that cooperation between the United

objective. We view cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU as an important partnership with

far-reaching benefits. At the OAU summit held in Algeria in 1999, African heads of State adopted a Declaration that, among other things, stated:

> "While expressing satisfaction at the various cooperation initiatives and approaches in favour of Africa, we reaffirm our readiness and willingness to promote, with all our partners, a genuine partnership devoid of any selfish calculations for influence, a partnership that respects the unity of the continent and aims at the development of Africa, rather than using it as a mere reservoir of raw materials and a market for manufactured goods, a partnership that enables Africa to achieve its integration, ensure its development for the benefit of its peoples and occupy its rightful place on the international scene for the mutual and inclusive benefit of the international community as a whole." (*A/54/424, annex II*)

At this point I would like to paraphrase two of the key themes mentioned by the Foreign Minister of Namibia, Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, on the occasion of the general debate this year: without the demonstration of enlightened self-interest by our development partners in embracing the idea of a Marshall Plan for Africa, all our efforts will not make the required drastic impact on the situation in Africa; without a serious consideration of the proposition for compensation and reparations to Africa for injustices done in the past, justice will not be served and that chapter of our history will remain open. This is the time for reconciliation based on courage, solidarity and justice. Namibia trusts that cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations will continue to be premised upon, and promote, these virtues.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX), of 11 October 1965, I now call on the observer for the Organization of African Unity to make a statement.

Mr. Kebe (Organization of African Unity) (*spoke in French*): First of all, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), I would like to extend to the President my warmest congratulations on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly. I would also like to thank everyone who spoke before me to support the efforts made by the OAU and the United

partnership. In particular, I would like to mention the representative and current Chairman of the OAU, the Ambassador of Togo.

My thanks, of course, go also to the Secretariat of the United Nations for its tireless efforts to raise cooperation between our two organizations to an ever higher level. Last year, we described that cooperation as exemplary; today I strongly reiterate the satisfaction of the OAU with that cooperation, and the great importance it attaches to it.

I want to express my satisfaction at the return of Somalia to the comity of nations after an absence of more than a decade. I urge all States members of our organizations to help sustain the momentum generated by the meeting held at Arta, Djibouti. Further, I urge Somali leaders to pursue their endeavours towards national reconciliation and the rebuilding of State structures.

The report of the Secretary-General (A/55/498) describes precisely and in detail the achievements of the United Nations and of the OAU over the past year. Twice-yearly meetings between the two Secretaries-General make it possible to define overall direction and to reaffirm the principles and purposes that guide our cooperation. Consultations held periodically at New York and at Addis Ababa and joint work in the field have enabled our two teams to carry out the directives of our leadership and the recommendations set out in resolutions of the General Assembly.

Let me observe here that today's debate takes place following the thirty-sixth session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU, which was held at Lome last July.

Before that, in 1999 at Algiers and at Sirte, Africa's heads of State or Government took important decisions aimed at strengthening the continent's capacity to address the many challenges it faces, both at the continent and world levels. Among those decisions, let me mention Africa's firm and resolute decision that 2000 should be a year of peace and stability in the continent. It was also decided to hasten the process of integration in Africa through speedy implementation of the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community. Those are two major issues for consideration and action; they are also promising areas for cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations, and I shall therefore make some

The decision that 2000 should be a year of peace and stability in Africa reflects our determination to change the state of affairs by making a more positive impact on the future of our countries and our peoples. To that end, we must turn our back on tension and conflicts, with their resultant massive flows of refugees and displaced persons, and to open the way to an era of security and stability in which all of our human and material resources can finally be used to build our States, consolidate democracy and ensure economic and social development for our countries and well-being and improved lives for our peoples.

Here I would refer to the preliminary work of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871).

At Algiers, our heads of State or Government, in the course of an extremely honest and open debate, addressed head-on the concerns of Africa's partners about democratization, good governance and respect for human rights. The resulting decision was that leaders who had seized power by overthrowing a democratically elected Government would no longer be accepted in the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. That indicates the seriousness and determination of African leaders in that connection.

At present, we must manage current conflicts and find lasting solutions for them. Then, we must spare no effort to prevent the outbreak of further conflicts. That constitutes a genuine programme, and it requires ever closer cooperation with the United Nations. In connection with conflict management, the OAU and African subregional organizations — the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) — have taken the initiative by bringing parties together at the negotiating table, which has led to the signature of peace agreements.

But implementing such agreements requires financial and material resources beyond the capacity of those organizations. Hence the need for the United Nations, and more specifically the Security Council, to step in promptly by dispatching peacekeeping forces or peace-building missions. But the Council's slow has been necessary in mid-stream to devise ad hoc procedures for specific situations, such as those of Somalia and of Rwanda.

It is urgent that conflicts be prevented; it is always less costly to invest in prevention. That is why we call for greater cooperation in this sphere between the United Nations on the one hand and the OAU and African regional organizations on the other. The OAU needs more support from the United Nations to develop an early warning system within the OAU's Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Moreover, there is no denying that the United Nations has a greater capacity for gathering information that it could share with the OAU.

The OAU needs to work in close cooperation with the United Nations on how to deal with regions or countries when everything points to the imminent outbreak of conflict. It is sometimes very difficult to draw a distinction between prevention and intervention.

Then there is the social and humanitarian field; as a result of overt or latent conflicts in Africa, there is a growing number of refugees, displaced persons and repatriated persons. To this we must add the effects of natural disasters such as floods, cyclones and droughts. This calls for greater cooperation and coordination between our two organizations. For the 7 million African refugees, we are asking for resources commensurate with the scale of the continent-wide disaster, and for equal treatment vis-à-vis refugees in other continents.

I cannot conclude this portion of my statement without mentioning the important meeting of the Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa, held at Abuja in May 2000. This new process brings together, in an interdependent way, the concepts of security, stability, development and cooperation, with a collective approach encompassing all of Africa. This is a thunderbolt in the African sky; while there was not a great deal of media coverage, this event can in many respects be compared with the Helsinki process.

The second important decision taken at the fourth OAU Extraordinary Summit, held at Sirte, and then crystallized at Lome in July, was to create an African Union in conformity with the fundamental purposes of

Establishing the African Economic Community, and to strengthen and consolidate the regional economic communities that are the pillars of the attainment of the objectives of the African Economic Community and of the anticipated Union.

That was a decision of fundamental importance. It came at the end of a long process that began at Lagos in 1980, that continued at Abuja in 1991 and that culminated at Tripoli in 1999, then to be given concrete form at Lome in 2000. If Africa wants to count in the century of globalization and play its part in the management of world affairs, it must do so united, with its constituent parts acting in solidarity, and on the basis of true integration. That is the great challenge facing Africa on the eve of the third millennium — the road that it must take if it is to achieve economic and social development.

Africa can take up this challenge only with the help and support of the international community. I should like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to the international community for the support provided for the development process in Africa through initiatives at national, subregional and continent-wide levels.

Despite all of this support, poverty is still the major problem in many countries in our continent. When we speak of poverty in Africa, we are talking not about mere statistics but about real problems faced by the poor on a daily basis. Production is at an all-time low, income does not even come close to meeting the basic needs of people. High rates of inflation and unemployment are widespread. Most, if not all, African Governments have undergone structural adjustment, taking political and social risks that have far outweighed the tangible economic benefits that have resulted.

Africa is also handicapped by widespread pandemics, such as HIV/AIDS and malaria. All of the concerted efforts on the part of Africa and the international community are being thwarted by the devastating effects of these two major scourges that, if nothing is done, will wipe out all the progress made in economic and social development in the continent. The United Nations Secretary-General has already taken the initiative to lead the International Partnership against

At this time of globalization, when only the strongest economies survive, Africa wants above all to be self-reliant, delving into its resources and its imagination to come up with initiatives that will save it. But it will need international solidarity if it is to succeed in its task. Such solidarity should, first of all, be demonstrated in the case of the foreign debt, which was assessed at about $220 billion in 1997. Debt servicing consumes all of the resources that would go towards development plans for the continent. That is why the OAU is calling on its partners to consider the best means of simply cancelling the entire debt, thereby making available significant resources for the economic recovery of the continent. We appeal to the solidarity of our partners to help to find a definitive solution to the problem and call for an increased number of new and additional resources to supplement direct foreign investment and make African countries more competitive. It is in our partners' interests to deal with an Africa whose economy has recovered, an Africa that is strong, stable and in control of its own destiny.

The concept of the global village has never meant so much as it means today. Globalization is characterized by the interrelationship between the means of communication and knowledge, cultural crossover and economic interdependence. Distances are shrinking, differences and peculiarities are being reduced and people are being brought closer together, thereby ushering in a new humanism — the humanism of the twenty-first century. Such is the state of the world today, as conveyed by the Declaration of the Millennium Summit that was recently held here. But that vision of the world seems to me to be far from the vision of most people, who still think in terms of different countries and continents. They should rather be thinking about a global village, with its underlying foundation and value of solidarity. We must make this qualitative leap forward if in the future we are to avoid such disasters as those that brought bloodshed to the first half of this century and continuing tension to the second half.

The United Nations and the OAU now fully understand these new challenges and I am happy to say, here today, that they are now striving to make people and institutions ready to live the good life in the village

inform members that a draft resolution under this item will be submitted at a later date.

I should also like to inform members that the remaining two items on the agenda for this morning, namely, agenda item 23, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", and agenda item 36, "Bethlehem 2000", will be taken up this afternoon promptly at 3 p.m.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would like to express gratitude to our interpreters for their special effort today.

The meeting rose at 1.30 p.m.